

AGAINST TITANS. THE REPUTATION OF THE 3rd COUNT OF ASSUMAR IN THE NEWS ABOUT THE 1720 UPRISING IN VILA RICA

CONTRA TITANES. LA REPUTACIÓN DEL 3^{er} CONDE DE ASSUMAR EN LAS NOTICIAS SOBRE EL LEVANTAMIENTO DE VILA RICA EN 1720

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Recibido: 30/12/2021 · Aceptado: 13/07/2022

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5944/etfv.35.2022.32586>

Abstract

This paper analyzes an anonymous manuscript on the 1720 Vila Rica Revolt, in the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro, in the State of Brazil. By understanding the text inside and out, one comes into contact with political ideas from the 16th-century Europe about reasons of state and the power of the prince, and their appropriations in the 18th-century manuscript that reports the uprising. The former captaincy governor was concerned with his reputation when he returned to the kingdom of Portugal in 1722, in view of the violent punishment he applied in Minas. The analysis combines aspects of writing, materiality, comparative studies and the trajectory of this handwritten news through various collections. It is mainly about realizing the historical significance of its likely circulation in the early 1720s, through well-founded hypotheses.

Keywords

Minas Gerais; Portuguese America; Count of Assumar; hermeneutics; handwritten news; political ideas

Resumen

Este artículo analiza un manuscrito anónimo sobre la Revuelta de Vila Rica en 1720, en la capitania de São Paulo y Minas de Oro, en el Estado de Brasil. Al comprender el texto por dentro y por fuera, se entra en contacto con ideas políticas de la Europa del siglo XVI sobre las razones de estado y el poder del príncipe, y sus apropiaciones en el manuscrito del siglo XVIII que relata la sublevación. El ex gobernador de la capitania estaba preocupado por su reputación cuando regresó al reino de Portugal

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Translated by Christiano Sanches. Acknowledgements to Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) - Project 303538/2019-8; Fundação Carlos Chagas Filho de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Faperj) - Project E-26/010.000101/2016; Marcella Miranda; Márcia Almada and Pedro Henrique Lima.

en 1722, ante el violento castigo que el ha aplicado en Minas. El análisis combina aspectos de escritura, materialidad, estudios comparativos y la trayectoria de esta noticia manuscrita a través de diversas colecciones. Se trata principalmente de darse cuenta del significado histórico de su probable circulación a principios de la década de 1720, a través de hipótesis bien fundamentadas.

Palabras clave

Minas Gerais; América portuguesa; conde de Assumar; hermenéutica; noticias escritas a mano; ideas políticas

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THE MANUSCRIPT

This article deals with an existing manuscript at the Institute of Brazilian Studies of the University of São Paulo (IEB-USP). The *Notícia da sublevação, que nas minas do Ouro Preto houve no anno de 1720* (News of the uprising that took place in the Ouro Preto mines in the year 1720) was acquired between 1906 and 1920 by Alberto Frederico de Moraes Lamego, in a second-hand bookshop in Lisbon during a long stay in Europe². In 1929, this rich bibliophile from the state of Rio de Janeiro published some articles in newspapers in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, in which he paraphrased the document that would tell «the truth» about the so-called Vila Rica Revolt, in the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro, in June and July 1720. The event united miners and traders against the establishment of foundries in the region, to better separate the tribute from the fifth of the gold extracted from most rivers. Lamego attributes the authorship of the manuscript to the «fidalgo» (member of the high nobility) Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal (1688-1756), 3rd Count of Assumar, future 1st Marquis of Alorna, governor of that captaincy from 1717 to 1721³. The collector was followed in this opinion by two other historians: Affonso Taunay, in *História geral das bandeiras paulistas*, and Rodolfo Garcia, in the note he wrote in a 1934 edition of *História geral do Brasil*, by the nineteenth-century historian Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagen⁴. Taunay and Garcia were Lamego's interlocutors and sporadic guests at his manor house in Campos dos Goytacazes, in the north of the state of Rio de Janeiro, where the valuable collection of manuscripts and printed matter was located, which in 1935 was sold to the government of São Paulo, being kept at the University of São Paulo since then⁵.

The *Notícia*, as we refer to it for brevity's sake, is today an anonymous codex with dimensions of 32 by 22 cm, with 58 pages numbered and written on foolscap, the dimensions of which are somewhat larger than the sheets of a current foolscap. In 1994 Laura de Mello e Souza relates the text of the *Notícia* to another text well known to the Brazilian public, *Discurso histórico e político*, deposited in the Arquivo Público Mineiro (APM), in Belo Horizonte, but which was momentarily missing⁶. In 2016, with access to the two manuscripts, Márcia Almada and I identified that both texts had the same graphic and intellectual authorship, being produced under the same circumstances and with the same type of Genoese-made paper – through the comparative study of word corrections and crossed out or erased letters, we found that the *Discurso* was produced shortly before the *Notícia*⁷.

2. IEB-USP (Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros-Universidade de São Paulo), Alberto Lamego (AL)-061, *Notícia da sublevação, que nas minas do Ouro Preto houve no anno de 1720*, ms. 58 p.

3. In the numbers analyzed, the articles arranged in columns and with subtitles organizing the contents present word changes and shorter periods in relation to the original text of the *Notícia*, in addition to the interface present with other documents. Therefore, it is not a literal publication of his text. Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Biblioteca Nacional (Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil-BNB), Hemeroteca Digital (HD), TRB00177.0171, label 110523_02, Lamego, (1929).

4. Taunay, 1949: 179-180; Varnhagen, 1981: 108.

5. Soffiati, 199; Nogueira et al., 2002.

6. Souza, 1994.

7. Almada and Monteiro, 2019: 1-25.

Less known than the famous *Discurso historico*, much better cared for and bigger, and which has so far deserved two publications in a book⁸, the manuscript of the *Noticia* was little consulted and commented on in the bibliography until this research⁹. Paradoxically, the material and visual examinations show that the copy of the *Noticia* was more handled than the *Discurso*, although the timing of these handlings is unknown¹⁰.

The two manuscripts were likely produced in the 1st half of 1721 in Ribeirão do Carmo, the current city of Mariana, in the state of Minas Gerais, with the leading role of the Jesuits Antonio Correia and José Mascarenhas as authors. But receptions for the manuscripts were different. While the *Discurso* had a particular destination, restricted to the noble house of Assumar and Alorna, the text of the *Noticia* resembles the handwritten news that circulated among a select and learned audience in Portugal in the first half of the 18th century. It has not yet been possible to verify the existence of copies or summaries of this text in Portuguese collections, but the handwritten circulation was the most appropriate in this case, because in the *Noticia* an episode is reported with a controversial outcome in the eyes of the Portuguese monarchy, such as the burning of houses on the Ouro Podre hill, in Vila Rica, and the punishment without formal judgment of the drover Felipe dos Santos. The display of such events on printed paper were inconvenient to the public order¹¹. Therefore, the *Noticia* seems to have been made to circulate selectively among Portuguese nobles in the 1720s, when the 3rd Count of Assumar was back at the Portuguese court. On the other hand, the lighter handwriting and the various erasures in the text disallow – at least for the IEB-USP exemplary – the hypothesis of a formal destiny within the scope of the Portuguese monarchy.

THE PLOT

Even though it is a smaller text and less plural than the *Discurso*, there are several aspects to be explored in the *Noticia*. For example, the relationship between history and fiction, the proximity or differences with exemplary novels from the beginning of the Modern Era, its frame, its protagonists and composition, according to the analysis script suggested by a young Erich Auerbach¹². It is also possible to describe the 120 numbered paragraphs, the 300 gloss notes that summarize the narrative contents, and the few authorities and works cited – something quite different from the codex that is in Belo Horizonte today, full of this type of references. There is also a writing obliterated by excess ink in the lower right corner of the last page,

8. Veiga, 1898; Souza, 1994.

9. Monteiro, in press.

10. APM, Avulsos da Capitania de Minas Gerais (AVC)-017, *Discurso historico, e político sobre a sobrelevação, que nas Minas houve no anno de 1720. No fim do qual se expendem as razões, que o Excellentissimo Senhor Conde General teve para proceder summariamente ao castigo*, ms. 476 p.

11. Lisboa, 1998; Belo, 2001; Belo, 2005; Almada and Monteiro, 2019: 7-14.

12. Auerbach, 2013; Lima, 2021: 188-204.

now damaged there by oxidation, which may once have been a signature – but for now this is just an assumption.

But this manuscript presents a more secularized political history than the *Discurso*, with few fabulous parallels or overt philosophical digressions. This narrative model is found in Philippe de Commines' memoirs, in the history of the religious wars in France by Enrico Caterino Davila, and in other books consulted by the collaborative authorship of the two manuscripts, referenced in marginal notes in the codex deposited at the APM in Belo Horizonte¹³. Thus, I choose here to follow the understandings of politics, State and reasons of State that exist in the text of the *Noticia*, no judgments made *a priori*. This analysis was made in relation to the *Discurso*¹⁴, but it is necessary to remember that the texts had different receptions and that the IEB-USP manuscript was probably aimed at a restricted circulation.

In short, the *Noticia* begins with the imitation of Sallust's exordium in *The Conspiracy of Catiline*, since this uprising would be the worst that there was in Rome, or in Minas, by disobeying and wanting to usurp the prince's property, turning vassals into sovereigns¹⁵. The narrative moves to before 1720, when the arrival of the fleet, the new law of fifths, the formation of the elite troop of soldiers – the so-called *dragões* (dragons) – the attempt to control the troops of ordinances formed by local inhabitants, and the expulsion of the regular religious orders from Minas affected the powerful in the region, bringing changes «to the republic» of Minas, «restless by nature». Among the powerful locals, the most hurt of all was Pascoal da Silva Guimarães. The *Noticia* portrays his vices – the influence of the model portraits existing in the works of Sallust and Tacitus is clear here¹⁶. The merchant hid his cavils with modesty, mildness and meekness. Being vile, he was seditious, malevolent, sly, and vindictive. He plotted to expel from the government the Count General, to whom he owed benefits and favors. The *cabeça* (leader) of the uprising owned nearly 300 slaves and some *engenhos* (plantations), but he feared the *ouvidor* (local judge) for the Ouro Preto *comarca* (ancient administrative division), Martinho Vieira. So, he wanted to kill the *ouvidor*, expel the count and reduce the *state* («estado») to a republic of 24 men with its doge – in the manner of Venice – making Rio de Janeiro a free port for foreigners. On the other hand, the *ouvidor* had a loose tongue and publicly discomposed haughty men – like Sebastião da Veiga

13. Comines, 1714; Davila, 1713; Bertelli, 1984; Grafton, 2007.

14. Monteiro, in press: chap. 5.

15. The conjuration of patricians in Rome in the I century B. C. – described in Sallust's monograph and in Cicero's prayers *Catilinarias* – is a metaphor for the uprising of Vila Rica in 1720, especially in the codex AVC-17 deposited with the APM, but also in the letter of Governor Pedro de Almeida to Dom João V of 07/21/1720. Monteiro, 2015: 179-221; in press: chap. 4.

16. Born in Guimarães, in the kingdom of Portugal, Pascoal da Silva became a salesman in Rio de Janeiro and arrived in Minas in 1707, benefiting from external contacts. The merchant was promoted to major (*sargento mor*) in the government of Fernando de Lencastre in Rio de Janeiro (1705-1709) and later to captain (*mestre de campo*). He was part of the chamber's first electoral commission at the founding of Vila Rica in 1711, being a judge ordinary in 1719 and interfering in the chamber through his son João da Silva, an judge ordinary in 1719 and 1720. Upon arriving in Minas in 1717, Pedro de Almeida met Pascoal da Silva and the hill on which he had shops and many enslaved people, especially men. The powerful man was arrested in 1720 and taken to Portugal – it is not known when he died. Távora and Cobra, 1999: 204 and 220; Romeiro 2008: 132-144. Rezende, 2015: 139, 156-157; Monteiro, in press: chaps. 1, 3, 4.

Cabral, who also caviled at him¹⁷. Pascoal da Silva, Veiga and others were in debt, but were amassing power with the riots. It is then explained how the uprisings are formed in the country of Minas, first generically, then in a detailed way about the rebellion of 1720¹⁸.

In the proposal written by the scholar José Peixoto, the insurgents called for the end of the mint and coin house, cattle, tobacco and salt contracts. The *cabeças* (leaders) showed the people that the count was strict with the king's orders. The proposal was read to the people and sent to the count by an emissary on horseback, shouting that the *Geráis* (referring to the region of Minas Gerais) were rising. The count ordered the deployment of the *Companhia dos Dragões*, called the *ouvidor* and several *principais* (local elite) to go to Ribeirão do Carmo with their armed *negros* (black men) – a term of social and ethnic declassification, used for enslaved people of African descent, and for indigenous and mestizo people. He also warned the region's *ouvidores*, but did not attack Vila Rica because he did not have all the dragons at the moment. Upon receiving the proposal, the count said that many points would be resolved by the king, and for others he waited for the *ouvidores*. But the people went back to mutiny, because the *cabeças* (leaders) said that the count wanted to deceive them. The people's procurators asked the count to go to Vila Rica to grant a pardon. The count replied that he would go, but he feared an ambush. Along with some *principais* (members of the local elite), he said he could grant forgiveness in extreme cases, but that would only be valid if the king agreed. Procurators wanted an unconditional pardon. The count told them to do as they pleased, but the final order would be from the king. He then sent an edict to the Vila Rica chamber («câmara») suspending the foundry houses until 1721 as well as the road contracts. The insurgents ignored the edict, saying that the count needed to go alone to Vila Rica¹⁹.

The count replied that he would go by the following morning, but the rebels armed themselves and marched first with about 1,500 men to Vila do Carmo. Felipe dos Santos would have a band to shoot at the count's house. He promised not to carry out the threat as long as the count accepted the entire proposal. The dragons guarded the palace, the *principais* of the village came to the rescue with their armed «blacks». The palace and neighboring houses were loaded with gunpowder and bullets. The count sent some *principais* and officers to meet the people on the road to see if they respected the royal standard, without success. In Vila do Carmo, Sebastião da Veiga Cabral posed as the representative of the people, but concealed the action with the governor. When the people arrived at the palace, the count, stern

17. Of New Christian origin on the part of his eponymous father, Sebastião da Veiga Cabral was born in Portugal and followed a military career, governing Colonia de Sacramento from 1699 to 1705, in what is now Uruguay. He later acted in the War of Succession in Spain (1701-1713), when he wrote the *Representação* about that overseas colony, then returned to the Spaniards. He tried to be governor of the Minas Gerais captaincy three times, losing the elections in the Overseas Council to Brás Baltasar da Silveira, Pedro de Almeida Portugal and Lourenço de Almeida. In 1717 he was in Minas. Arrested in the repression of the 1720 uprising, he was taken to Rio de Janeiro and then Portugal, where he died in January 1730. Souza, 2006: 253-283.

18. IEB-USP, AL-61, *Notícia da sublevação*, pp. 1-16.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-23.

and steadfast, was at the window, being hailed with cheers and applause. According to the *Notícia*, the people were fickle, for now they behaved like tame sheep, now they were treated violently by the *cabeças* (leaders). José Peixoto came up with the proposal «all rightfully alleged» («toda allegada de direyto»). The procurator wanted to check what would be read with what was left in the Secretariat, and the pardon would be sealed with the royal arms. When the edict was read, the people applauded the general again and retired to Vila Rica, where there were lamps. To the *Notícia*, in case the count objected, Felipe dos Santos instructed several men to kill him, take over the government and charge a much smaller amount of fifths, as these points comprised «all the *state*» («todo o *estado*»). The count did not attack in Vila do Carmo, preferring to find out how the neighboring peoples were doing. Among the *principais* there were «double agents» («espias добres»), and this would be the greatest disgrace in those countries, where the royal arm was poorly armed for its conservation, needing to yield to traitors. But the count was vigilant, keeping the dragons ready and writing to several at night, doing everything for the public's peace. He also asked the vicars to pray for the «peace and quiet of the *state*» («páz, e quietação do *estado*»)²⁰.

The *cabeças* (leaders) then organized another mutiny in Vila Rica to depose Martinho Vieira – in the *Notícia* it is agreed that this *ouvidor* was reckless. The count told him to move away from the *comarca*, «until he sees the *state* of things» («até ver o *estado*, em que se punhaõ as couzas»). And he called former *ouvidor* Mosqueira da Rosa, who complained about the «dangerous *state* of the land» («perigozo *estado* da terra»), wanting a new position for himself. The count gave the former *ouvidor* hope without committing himself, and asked him to work for the public peace. But Mosqueira joined Felipe dos Santos and Pascoal da Silva, who articulated his popular acclaim as an *ouvidor*. The count also asked Pascoal da Silva for the peace of the village, but it was already public that these were the main *cabeças* (leaders) of the uprising²¹.

Sebastião da Veiga Cabral also tried to please the residents, and then told the king that they wanted him as governor. Veiga's stratagems are remembered in twelve long paragraphs. Claiming to flee from the popular outcry, he leaves disguised as a woman, in an embarrassing situation according to the *Notícia*. But halfway there, he meets Mosqueira and his Benedictine son. Back in Vila do Carmo, Veiga proposed that the Count pretend to be sick and leave the government, so the riots could end. Everything indicated that he was involved in «this mess» («nesta maroma»). The count said he would respond the next day, but received a letter saying that that night the people would expel him and make Veiga governor. He also received warnings from Pascoal da Silva that he would be expelled from the government. These were the wiles of the *cabeças* (leaders), for if the machination was discovered, they would have a defense²².

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-30. Italics are mine.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-33. Italics are mine.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-43.

The Count General then ordered a troop of dragons to be deployed to Vila Rica, while arresting Sebastião da Veiga. He sent horses to the houses of Mosqueira and Pascoal da Silva, also arresting the friars involved. But in Vila Rica, masked men and armed «blacks» walked down the Ouro Podre hill shooting and breaking down doors, so that the residents could release the prisoners. The count agreed with the *principais* in Vila do Carmo that it was necessary to send dragons and armed «blacks» to contain the residents, fight the insurgents and devastate the homes of Pascoal da Silva and his assistants. He was escorted to Vila Rica, where he learned that some rebel accomplices had gone to Cachoeira to gather more rioters. The rioters abused the count's pardons, piety and patience. Despite being forgiving and having compassion for farms, lives and honors, he needed to let loose his rage and inflict a horrendous punishment. He then ordered the officers and dragons to demolish the houses of Pascoal da Silva and the rioters who were plotting a «republic» in this government. According to the *Notícia*, the «blacks», wanting the drinks from the shops, demolished and burned houses at the same time. The flames reached the straw in the houses, increasing the fire. Then Felipe dos Santos was arrested in Cachoeira and arrived in Vila Rica. In a summary trial, he confessed the plan made under the orders of Pascoal da Silva and Mosqueira. He was hanged and dismembered to applause the same day. To the *Notícia*, the disturbances stopped with this punishment and the burning of the hill²³.

The second part of the text, on the Count General's reasons for carrying out the punishment, is much shorter than the first, beginning at paragraph 95 and occupying only the last ten pages of the manuscript. For these, the people from Minas should thank God for the Count to put an end to the oppression and tyranny that threatened them and «*the entire state*» («*todo o estado*»). Nine reasons are arranged in anaphora form, with repeated expressions. 1st) The punishment was extremely necessary, as the count granted two pardons and the rebellion continued for 18 days, wanting to impugn the royal orders, expel the governor and «*reduce this state*» («*reduzir este estado*») to a «republic». 2nd) It was extremely necessary, always repeating the expression, because in Rio das Velhas they adhered to the proposal of Vila Rica. 3rd) The *principais* (local elite) of São João del Rey agreed with those of Vila Rica about the foundry houses («*casas de fundição*»). 4th) Not to happen the same as in Pitangui and Serro do Frio. 5th) The other villages saw what happened in Vila Rica, where the count's government was the Hercules of these hydras and lions. 6th) Even those from Vila do Carmo could join the uprising, believing in the subjection and ruin of the «*state*» («*estado*»). 7th) To show that the shadow or image of the king on his representative was enough for his justice to triumph. 8th) The arrest of the *cabeças* (leaders) did not stop the mutinies. 9th) The breaking of pardons made the gentle and slow remedies unfeasible, as this mutiny was a rebellion against the sovereign and the «*state*» («*estado*») of things would be safe with readiness, being dangerous to wait for justice. Here are quoted excerpts in Latin from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* on the Spartan king Agesilaus, of John Chrysostom commenting on

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-48.

the book of the prophet Isaiah about the duty of princes and of a speech by Juan de Solórzano Pereira, dealing with the authority of the prince²⁴.

From doctrine to experience, the Quilombo of Palmares is remembered, which in Pernambuco pulled «all the forces of the *state*» («por todas as forças do *estado*»). In the hinterland of America, the Mines were difficult to subjugate and had a more important asset. Its loss would cause great damage to the crown. Giovanni Botero is then quoted, in a treaty attached to *Della ragion di stato*, on the prince's reputation, and the bishop of Salamanca, Juan Valenzuela, on the effects of the loss of reputation of the king. Finally, previous riots are remembered, from the Emboabas War (1707-1709) to the most recent ones in Pitanguí. Plutarch is quoted again in the *Moralia*, when delay makes one lose faith in divine providence. Therefore, the king must be like the hundred-armed giant Briareus, capable of defeating the titans, or like a Sun full of wrath, smiting from the neighboring hill to the farthest valley²⁵.

WHAT REASON OF STATE?

The *Noticia* is a somewhat repetitive text aimed at persuading, with a plot that introduces intrigues and characters to the readers of this «event» («sucesso») – as it is written in the manuscript. The military aspect highlighted in the narrative is explained by the participation of the former general in the War of Succession in Spain, transformed, in the *Noticia*, into a bellicose hero, the «Count General». Upon arriving in São Paulo in September 1717, Pedro de Almeida delivered a pompous speech mentioning his past laurels²⁶. But the detail of this past experience does not appear in the *Noticia*, nor the names Assumar – in 1718 the governor was authorized by Dom João V (1707-1750) to call himself count of this noble house, with his father still alive – or even Pedro de Almeida, or Count Dom Pedro. There are only allusions in the manuscript to Saint Peter, to whom Pedro de Almeida was a devotee. The readers of the *Noticia* understood who the protagonist was, which was another indication of the textual form that aimed to instruct, delight and persuade, circulating in Portugal since 1722, when Pedro Miguel returned to the kingdom.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-53. Italics are mine. The translation of the quoted passage in Latin by Plutarch would be: «The emperor's duty is to use audacity against the rebels», by the apothegms of Erasmus of Rotterdam. The commentary in Latin by John Chrysostom, would translate as follows: «It is the duty of princes to repress the licentious and disorderly rebellion of the people, and to keep them in their duty». Finally, the extract from the translated speech: «Nothing harms kingdoms more than the prince's loss of authority; in fact, from this inconvenience, many different disastrous effects are born, which can only be met with enormous fatigue, intelligence and considerable expense». Pereyra, 1676: 515.

25. IEB-USP, AL-61, *Noticia da sublevação*, pp. 53-58. Italics are mine. The *Aggiunte* to *Della ragion di stato* were published, for example, in Rome (1598), in Venice in 1606 and later, separately or as annexes to the main work. Torgal and Ralha, 1992: LII. The commentary by Juan Valenzuela, bishop of Salamanca during the reign of Philip III, would translate as follows: «These are the effects that are observed in the king who possesses or who loses his reputation among the vassals: as long as he possesses it, he will be a rich man; once he loses it, he will be left with poverty». Finally, we turn to Plutarch, on the late revenge of the gods, translating here the Latin passage in the central text: «for the delay of God's providence undermines faith». Thiépolo, 1632: 94.

26. Souza, 1997: 67-83; Souza, 1999: 30-42; Martín Marcos and Monteiro, 2017: 253-284.

As in the *Discurso*, one can see in the text an oscillation in the semantics of the term *state* – always handwritten with lowercase *e* (in the Portuguese original *estado*, equivalent to a lowercase «s» in the English word «state»). Sometimes, in the *Notícia*, it means monarchic rule in opposition to an Italian republic – subversive in the manner of Venice – or to the Quilombo of Palmares, being capable of taxation and responsible for good public and Catholic order, thus associated with the *crown*. But the same word *state* is also understood as a public thing, the collective – or republic – of Minas, without the sense of sedition; or it is used to refer to the state of affairs, the stillness or danger of the earth. Although they appear intertwined, the denotations do not constitute a political abstraction, a *persona ficta* of the State, more typical of languages from the second half of the 18th century²⁷.

In relation to spaces, the *Notícia* is concentrated in the country of Minas, that «rich portion» («rica porçã») of the royal property – as written in the first paragraph. In addition to the epicenter of the uprising in Vila Rica, Vila de Nossa Senhora de Ribeirão do Carmo – where the governor's «palace» was located – is also mentioned a lot. Then there are other nuclei and sites in *comarcas* of Minas Gerais, mentioned as places of riots or where the uprising of 1720 could spread to. The city of São Paulo appears as an alternative for the possible removal of the count, suggested by Sebastião da Veiga. There are sporadic mentions of contracts, corrals and backlands in Bahia under the command of Manoel Nunes Viana – but not to the capital of the State of Brazil. On the other hand, Rio de Janeiro is recurrent in the text, to tell the trajectory of Pascoal da Silva, as a port open to foreigners in the supposed plan of the uprising, or because it was the destination of fugitive or imprisoned rebels. Lisbon is mentioned only twice, from which the king's letters come, praising the count, or in a fortuitous way²⁸.

In the second part of the manuscript, references to the towns of Minas Gerais continue, with a lament also present in the *Discurso*: «Lastful and disgraced is the country of Minas, where it seems that until now it was ignored that it was in the prince's jurisdiction to punish the rebellion of the vassals!» («Lastimozo, e desgraçado paiz o das minas, onde parece se ignorava até aqui, que cabia na jurdição do Principe castigar a rebeldia dos vassallos!»). After the nine reasons listed, the arguments of the *Notícia* reach the Quilombo of Palmares in the captaincy of Pernambuco, mentioning the inhabitants of Porto Calvo in Alagoas and the work of Governor Caetano de Melo e Castro (1693-1699). In this view, the great quilombo would have been a scandal worse and more violent than the oppression of the Dutch in the region. In Minas, the fear of an uprising by enslaved people was great, as the correspondence of Pedro de Almeida shows. According to the *Notícia*, an uprising in Minas would jeopardize all the conquests of America and even the Portuguese kingdom, which had great resources in Minas²⁹.

27. A similar exercise for English history and with a wider range of texts was done by Skinner, 2011: 9, 49. The historian corrects his previous perspective, when he intended to recover a unique concept of the modern state. Skinner, 1996; 2006: 158-174.

28. IEB-USP, AL-61, *Notícia da sublevação*, pp. 1-48.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

Therefore, Portuguese conquests are mentioned in a fragmented way and restricted to America – something far from the reach of a Portuguese overseas empire. Even the political center of Lisbon is rarely mentioned. This aspect is explained by the monographic and summary profile of the *Notícia*. In this light, the *Discurso histórico* is more diversified, with mentions of riots in various places of the Iberian monarchies and other areas – but without a defined global-scale geopolitical conception. The Jesuits Antonio Correia and José Mascarenhas – probable authors of the manuscripts – were born and trained in philosophy in Rio de Janeiro, and later worked in Bahia, Pernambuco or São Paulo, before settling in Vila do Carmo to be confessors of the governor. Pedro de Almeida, in turn, had international experience in the War of Succession in Spain, but in his first overseas government he had not yet dealt with other Portuguese conquests³⁰.

With regard to virtues, according to the *Notícia* the Count General is an example of prudence, constancy, severity, piety, vigilance, patience, compassion, and mercy. Consulting the *principais* (the elite) of the land, he acted in the manner of a pilot with good handling of the rudder and connoisseur of the seas – according to the much-used allegory of the ship of the Republic. In adversity, he was like a Hercules facing hydras and lions. Despite taking care of the public peace, he needed to let off steam and apply a «horrible punishment» («horrorozo castigo»)³¹. In contrast, *ouvidor* Martinho Vieira was reckless, frivolous and outspoken, when he publicly decomposed others in an awkward way – this is the reason for his downfall. As for the *cabeças* (leaders) of the uprising, Pascoal da Silva was vile, seditious, malevolent, sly and vengeful, and Sebastião da Veiga was deceptive, phony, affected, with stratagems and machinations, making convulsions and grimaces. In general, in the text the rebels are considered malicious, deceiving the people and the *principais*, who were fickle.

The *topos* of prudence arises in the *Notícia* as the Count's political acumen in anticipating events, consulting the *principais* before making decisions, calculating the reactions of others, tempering caution and impetus, forgiveness and punishment. The count thus avoided his deposition, unlike what had happened with the *ouvidor*. At first, prudence would be the practical intelligence of which Aristotle spoke in *Ethics to Nicomachus*. The influence of the Aristotelian system in the training of the Jesuits Antonio Correa and José Mascarenhas through the *Ratio studiorum* program was huge, as well as in Pedro de Almeida³². By being prudent, the Count General

30. Monteiro, in press: chaps. 2, 3, 4.

31. IEB-USP, AL-61, *Notícia da sublevação*, p. 46. With a strong penetration in the Iberian Peninsula (according to some versions he would have died in Hispania), Heracles or Hercules was the civilizing hero *par excellence*, the most adaptable in the Greco-Roman Antiquity, with extraordinary qualities. The only Greek hero who was also a god, he was the very embodiment of triumph over human suffering. After becoming an emblem for humanists, in the Modern Period the tradition of Hercules is dispersed in various aspects of the hero, appearing in various figurative arts. The incidence of his example is present in neo-stoic values of European armies, with which Pedro Miguel de Almeida lived in the War of Succession in Spain. Galinsky, 2010: 427-429; Oestreich, 2008.

32. Aristote: livre VI; Franca, 1952: 119-230.

went beyond the formal law, taking the sword «without any semblance of justice» («sem mais tella de justiça»)³³.

But it would be excessive to associate the prudence described in the *Noticia* to a specific treatise, or to reduce its explanation to precepts and norms of rhetoric. For example, in this text the term «Machiavellianisms» («machavelismos») was crossed out and replaced by the words «those machines» («aquellas machinas»), written above the line with the same letter, to qualify the rebels' actions³⁴. Although the use of the first expression has been negatively connoted in the commentary on the rebels, in this and other cases the erasures of words may suggest an expectation to publish the text in printed form, which has not been fulfilled. In the *Discurso historico*, of private use, the term was retained³⁵. On the other hand, Giovanni Botero and Juan de Solórzano Pereira are among the few authorities cited in the *Noticia*. But this does not mean that this manuscript – and much less the actions of the 3rd Count of Assumar – were entirely guided by the advice of the famous book by the Piedmontese Jesuit or by the casuistry of the Spanish jurist. The concrete meaning of each case studied is given by the text in relation to its world and not by the bibliographic or literary tradition.

In the 2nd part of the *Noticia*, the nine reasons – more than in the *Discurso* – can be associated with a conventional sense of reason of state, defending the need for exceptional punishment without waiting for the time and formalities of legal justice. After all, the governor of the captaincy of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro punished a free white man without forming a board of magistrates. There is also the game of spies and secrets, dissimulations and strategies of the ruler and the rebels, because in this manuscript the political struggle appears narrated in a more pragmatic way.

The concept of reason of state is the subject of a vast bibliography produced in different times and fields: political science, history, law and letters, its polysemy being patent. A more concrete analysis is carried out here, on the readings made by the writers of the manuscript and their appropriations. We return then to Giovanni Botero's book, *Della ragion di stato*, in the part that was most consulted – in fact the only one cited of this work in the manuscripts of the *Noticia* and of the *Discurso*. These are the additions (*aggiunte*) made by the Piedmontese Jesuit to later editions of the book first published in 1589, especially the small treatise *Della riputatione del prencipe*. The treaties attached to *Della ragion di stato* were published after Botero's contact with Cinzio Aldobrandini's academy, nephew of Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) in Rome, 1594. In this environment focused on literary and political matters, Botero met scholars and philosophers such as the poet Torquato Tasso, author of *Jerusalem Delivered* and *Jerusalem Conquered*, the latter being printed in Rome in 1593 and dedicated to Aldobrandini. He also lived with Francesco Patrizi, author of treatises on poetics and rhetoric and books on Neoplatonic philosophy. Both were protégés of that patron at the end of their lives. Botero wrote the additions after

33. IEB-USP, AL-61, *Noticia da sublevação*, p. 21.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

35. APM, AVC-17, *Discurso historico, e político*, f. 112r.

the criticisms and suggestions received there, developing topics in relation to the original book³⁶.

The summary *Della riputatione* is organized by examples and sayings of characters and *auctoritates*, among powerful, ancient and modern authors, peoples such as the Romans, Macedonians and their armies, themes and *topoi* arranged in alphabetical order. It highlights love as the main foundation of the principality, the principle of authority of power, the difference between reputation and credit, how to conquer and preserve reputation, the importance of words, the dependence on being rather than on seeming, the role of secrecy, fear as the greater part of the prince's reputation, the variety and movement of States, the virtues of peace and war³⁷.

Botero dealt with the theme in a general way in book 2 in *Della ragion di stato*. But in the preface to the additional treatises, he writes that this supplement would be central to the work, as the concept of reputation was essential to political power. According to Victoria Kahn, in *Della riputatione* Botero affirms the importance of a «rhetoric» of the reason of state, exploring its implications on the prince's power, built by reputation and interest³⁸. The historian and literary critic uses the term *rhetoric* in the way of the humanists, to refer to a repertoire of persuasive means, from the figurative and formal language of a text to the posture of the speaker. It thus encompasses a tension in the humanistic tradition, between rhetoric defined as instrument and technique or conceived as a means of ethical deliberation. Hence specific techniques and arguments can subvert or qualify the meaning of a text, in poetic art and in the sphere of politics – as in treatises and mirror books dedicated to princes³⁹.

According to Kahn, Machiavelli and the writers he inspired adopted in their writings not only a more pragmatic conception of state art, but also an effective and persuasive discourse in political terms, in which the concept of reputation is inserted. The Florentine discussed the uses of reputation in several chapters of *The prince*, relating it to power. In his accompanying books, Botero followed Machiavellian observations by conceiving reputation as something more powerful than force itself, as it is capable of conquest and conservation, in addition to being less vulnerable to danger and accidents. For the Piedmontese Jesuit, the subjects confer the reputation, but the prince can manipulate their passions and interests to guarantee the throne. He therefore recommends that the prince stage a «politics of

36. Chabod, 1990: 254; Baldini, 1992: 352-353.

37. Botero Benefe, 1606.

38. Kahn, 1994: 75-84.

39. *Ibid.*: 5-6. According to Bluteau, *rhetoric* was the art of speaking elegantly, with good reason to prove and persuade listeners. The Theatine lists its parts (invention, disposition, elocution and pronunciation, and possibly memory) and genres (demonstrative, deliberative, judicial). It then deals with ecclesiastical rhetoric in the art of preaching, highlighting the panegyric, didascalical and parenetic genres, referencing Quintilian at the end of the entry. The *rhetorical* in turn was associated with to *sophist* by Greeks and Romans as skillful orators. Over time, the artful rhetoric was also criticized, and the tension between art and understanding remained. Bluteau, 1720: 305-306. In a contemporary sense, rhetoric would be the art of the word, of eloquence, of arguing well; or the set of rules that make it up; the discipline or classes that taught this art; the use of relevant resources and rules; the use of emphatic and pompous procedures to persuade or show off; an ornate and empty speech, or a debate on vain things. Houaiss et al., 2004: 2447.

the sublime» – Kahn recalls that Botero was a professor of rhetoric at the colleges of the Society of Jesus and an experienced poet, having previously written a treatise on sacred rhetoric. Therefore, in *Della ragion di stato* and its *aggiunte*, Botero uses rhetoric to deal with politics and to produce political effects – «rhetorical politics» in Kahn’s understanding, masking the prince’s dependence and instability in relation to his subjects⁴⁰.

By underlining the weight of the Counter-Reformation rhetoric and environment, Kahn problematizes the scope of John Pocock’s book on a republican and secular tradition to explain the «Machiavellian moment» in the West⁴¹. However, even though Botero has disguised the massive reception of Machiavelli’s ideas and discursive forms in *Della ragion di stato*, it may be objected that this works – and the English receptions collated in Kahn’s book – are better characterized as expressions of Machiavellianisms, even if they stand against Machiavelli. When contemplating the stereotype and the plural appropriations that have been swarming in the European world since the second half of the 16th century, broader and more complex than the only intellectual affiliation attributed by the author, *Machiavellianism* would be a concept less dependent on the Florentine author⁴².

But by explaining Botero’s book and highlighting his treatise on reputation from this perspective, Kahn’s analysis makes it possible to explore the *Discurso historico*, and especially the *Noticia*. Jesuits Antonio Correia and José Mascarenhas took courses in rhetoric and humanities at the Company’s colleges, where they taught philosophy before moving to Minas. Thus, they wrote about politics using rhetoric – above all classical – in order to persuade potential readers. This aspect is relevant in the *Noticia*, not only because political history is briefer and more concentrated there, but because arguments of this order appear in this manuscript according to an expected social reception – something different from the *Discurso*, probably written for the 3rd Count of Assumar himself and not exactly *by* him, as was once thought⁴³.

In the *Noticia* the social and political interests of the «Count General», described in the manner of a prince with *virtù* difficult to understand, are highlighted with impressive and surprising feats. The governor is reported to have spectacular demonstrations of power, causing fear in the Minas vassals and causing little harm. By aiming at the readers’ judgment, the persuasion in the text masks the coercion operated, with an illusion of grandeur and justifying the secrecy, which leaves the inhabitants and rebels of Minas in constant suspense. From this point of view, reputation would be power itself, since admiration appears in it mixed with fear, for the most part. The prince creates images of awe, playing with the realm of appearances – although Botero recoils from this note at the end of book 2 in *Della riputatione*, writing that princes should be what they seem⁴⁴.

40. Kahn, 1994: 76-77.

41. Pocock, 2003.

42. Senellart, 1989. Monteiro and Dantas, (2014): 1-26.

43. Monteiro, in press: chaps. 4, 5.

44. IEB-USP, AL-61, *Noticia da sublevação*. Botero Benefe, 1606: 81-105. KAHN, 1994: 77-83.

By way of comparison, in the *Discurso* the arguments are explained and the controversy between Giovanni Botero and Torquato Tasso is reproduced – which emerged in Aldobrandini’s Roman circle and was later expressed in the additional books of the Piedmontese Jesuit. According to the poet, the winegrower, in search of the best grapes, prunes the vineyard many times. In this way, it cuts off its own excesses and gains a reputation, reputation being the same as pruning. However, for Botero the reputation would be bestowed by the subjects, with love and fear towards the sovereign. In the *Discurso* one agrees in part with Tasso in stating that both reputable and reputation givers («reputantes») shape reputation. But the powerful prince must prune his vassals and not himself – in a wordplay between the verbs *prune* and *power*⁴⁵ («*podar*» and «*poder*», accordingly, in Portuguese).

In Botero and in the *Discurso*, one can see in this passage the use of arguments opposed to the scholastic way, the exemplary authority of the great Italian poet as a political interlocutor, and the ingenuity in emulating the Piedmontese Jesuit in the manuscript for private reception. The language of reason of state stands out for being similar to the episode narrated in Livy’s *Decades*, re-elaborated in the legend of the Bell of Huesca, later expressed by Cesare Ripa. In this representation, the armored female allegory, her dress decorated with eyes and ears, holds in one hand the stick that prunes the extra poppies – or vines – while her other hand leans on a lion, and she steps on the book of justice⁴⁶.

In the *Noticia*, with a more summarized and less referenced argument, other poetic allegories finish the manuscript, when comparing the power desired for the king of Portugal to the hundred-handed giant Briareus with fifty heads, or to the Sun, whose rays would be of wrath. By tracking readings made by the authors in the *Discurso* – with many more quotes – it can be seen that the mention of the Hundred-Handed is found in hymn VI of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, when Aeneas descends into the shadow world and encounters monstrous beings. Also in hymn VII of *The Lusads*, similarly to the deity sculpture found in India by Vasco da Gama. In the exposed allegories there are signifier changes. The solar star in the *Noticia* figures as being more furious than the festive metaphor of power employed in the reign of Dom João V⁴⁷. And in the Latin or Portuguese epics, the misshapen giant was disconcerting to the hero, whether Aeneas or the great navigator. Thus, the poetic dimension of the analyzed text is highlighted. At the end of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th century, Virgil was a model of composition in the Jesuit colleges, while the formal evocation of Camões merged with his own Portuguese-speaking identity⁴⁸.

The brief allusion to primordial chaos to represent the uprising may bear deeper meanings. In the works attributed to Homer and Hesiod, the three Hundred-Handed (Briareus, Cottus and Gyes), sons of Uranus and Gaia, were very strong. Thrown by Cronus into the infernal world of Tartarus, they were set free by Zeus,

45. APM, AVC-17, *Discurso historico*, ff. 158v-160r. Botero Benefe, 1606: 81-82.

46. Ripa, 1603: 427-428.

47. Bebiano, (1986): 111-121; 1987: 87-136.

48. Haskell, 2014: 203-216; Cunha, 2011: 172-176; Hansen, 2006: 139-214; Monteiro, in press: chap. 3, 4.

who immortalized them and made them his allies in the fight against the titans, the elemental and wild forces of Earth, much like the cyclops and the Hundred-Handed. In this struggle, the world returns to chaos until the titans are finally confined to Tartarus. With his simple presence, Briareus would later help Zeus to intimidate an attempt by Hera, Athena and Poseidon to dethrone the king of gods⁴⁹. The Hundred-Handed Briareus would thus signify fury and brute force in the service of the Olympic sovereign, against the titans or powerful locals.

But in the 1720s the scope of production of the *Noticia* was no longer guided by the problematic of Counter-Reformation, when Botero, Ludovico Zuccolo and other writers wrote about the reason of state, reacting to the ideas of Nicolau Machiavelli, Jean Bodin and the Protestant Reformers, who threatened the temporal power of the Catholic Church and its ascendancy over the princes⁵⁰. To understand the appropriations of political concepts and ideas and understand the meaning of the 18th century manuscript, it will be necessary to conjecture about its probable objectives and circulation.

AMONG REPUTED NOBLES

The apparent erasures of words and expressions in the *Noticia*, correcting or updating terms previously written in the *Discurso* – a much more aesthetically finished codex – suggest the expectation that that manuscript would be converted into print, as a *paper* in the manner of those circulating in Portugal in the first half of the 18th century. In favor of this possibility, there is the fact that political ideas are less bold in the *Noticia* as opposed to the inflamed *Discurso* – an unseemly text for any circulation. However, even with more calibrated arguments, the *Noticia* also narrates violent and controversial episodes in the eyes of the Portuguese monarchy, such as the punishment without formal judgment of Felipe dos Santos and the tragic fire in the Ouro Podre hill. Long texts depicting disorder and violence in an important overseas province compromised good public order. Thus, they were of no interest to editors of printed gazettes – which carried short news – or to printers of brochures and monographic papers⁵¹. The *Noticia* would hardly pass through the triple system of censorship in force in Portugal, composed of the *Desembargo do Paço*, the Inquisition and the ordinary episcopal power⁵².

Therefore, if the vain Pedro de Almeida at some point planned to have this text printed, the project was frustrated. On the other hand, the circulation of handwritten news was an adequate means of forming an opinion among a cultured and curious elite, who valued the manuscript in a context of greater censorship control over printed material, considered vulgar precisely because of its greater dissemination. Furthermore, the noble house of Assumar nourished an appreciation

49. Hesiodus, §§ 620-815; Vernant 2014 [1999]: 28-36; Brandão, 2015: 206, 217, 341; Kury, 2008: 117, 173, 388-389.

50. Comparato, 2016: 13-30.

51. Lisboa, 1998; Belo, 2001; 2005. Cavallé, 2002: 93-109.

52. Martins, 2005.

for handwritten accounts of its members' experiences⁵³. But why was it important to have the adherence of an erudite and aristocratic circle in Portugal that valued selected information?

In January 1721 there was a meeting of the Overseas Council in Lisbon to deliberate on events in Minas. The procurator and counselors read Pedro de Almeida's letters sent to the king in July 1720 and the missives from the Vila do Carmo and Vila Rica chambers, taking their stance on the riots and the governor's actions⁵⁴. They recognized the severity of the episodes, even more so for the breaking of pardons on the part of the insurgents. Although the governor did not wait to form a justice board or send Felipe dos Santos imprisoned to Rio de Janeiro, preferring to hang him immediately, his action was considered effective in stopping the riots. There is talk of zeal, courage, constancy and prudence, in Pedro de Almeida's good use of quick and violent military procedures. Several suggest that this government was investigated by the *ouvidor* of São Paulo, Rafael Pires Pardiniho⁵⁵. An alarmist, António Rodrigues da Costa recommended gentle means for the war not to spread in the State of Brazil. According to the councilor, the new governor Lourenço de Almeida should be warned to agree with the locals if necessary, and the minister responsible for the *devassa* (investigation) of the uprising would be the same as in the former governor's residence process (a verification of the righteousness of that government, usual in the Portuguese administration) – although this was not very decorous («decoroso»), according to Rodrigues da Costa⁵⁶.

In the APM, a copying codex of letters from governors and authorities reproduces a letter from Dom João V to Lourenço de Almeida, still in Lisbon, in March 1721. In the letter, the king is prudent in confirming the pardon given by Count Pedro de Almeida – who was in Minas, waiting for his successor to arrive in August – and instructs the new governor to welcome *ouvidor* Pardiniho to institute a *devassa* against the alleged rebels in 1720. Pardiniho would also carry out the residence process of the previous government, crucial for the peace of those peoples. Days later, the king confirms the pardon granted by the count governor to the rioters⁵⁷. From this perspective, Pedro de Almeida's government residence process took place in Minas without major problems.

According to the Count of Povolide, Pedro de Almeida's residence process took place in Brazil and continued on his return to Lisbon in March 1722. For this reason he would not go to the palace, being absent from the traditional kissing of the monarch's hand⁵⁸. In April of that same year, by request of the 3rd Count of Assumar, Dom João V asks the governor of Rio de Janeiro to send to Portugal those arrested in

53. Martín Marcos, 2021: 441-466.

54. Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU), codex 233, accessed on 09/01/1721, ff. 218r-223v.

55. Rafael Pires Pardiniho was *ouvidor-geral* in São Paulo, with jurisdiction to the south, and later was an intendant in the Diamantes District from 1734 to 1738, when he was appointed to the Overseas Council. Silva, 2006: 172.

56. Figueiredo, 2006: 187-203; Cruz, 2015: 108-138; Romeiro, 2017: 218-231.

57. APM, Secretaria de Governo da Capitania (SC)-16, ff. 82r-82v, Carta de El Rey nosso S. sobre o procedimento que se ha de ter com os povos q' se sobrevarão. Access on Sept 21, 2021. URL: <http://www.siaapm.cultura.mg.gov.br/modules/btrdocs/photo.php?lid=485>.

58. Saldanha and Radulet, 1990: 340, 351, 352, 358, 372, 406, 412.

the Vila Rica uprisings⁵⁹. In 1725 there was a commotion involving nobles in the Rossio square, in Lisbon, followed by the exile of 35 representatives of the high nobility, among them the young Count of Assumar, from 1726 to 1732. In my view, the episode is part of the process of gradual removal of the traditional nobility from the center of government, without a particular explicit motive against the former governor of São Paulo and Minas do Ouro⁶⁰. However, according to Maria Verônica Campos, before that, the governor had ordered the first 82 folios of a codex with orders and petitions now under the APM's custody to be ripped open, with the secretary's justification in September 1721 – when Pedro de Almeida was no longer in Minas – that they were an improper record. *Ouvidor* Rafael Pires Pardiniho was surprised by the action. The end of residence process of the 3rd Count of Assumar took place in Vila Rica on March 24, 1723, but according to the historian, it was unfinished⁶¹.

The controversy over the relative ostracism of former governor Pedro de Almeida in the kingdom was conditioned by the Brazilian bibliography about the same *Discurso*. In 1898, José Pedro Xavier da Veiga, in the first editions of this text in newspaper and book, mentions the «tradition of the responsibility process» moved by field master Pascoal da Silva Guimarães, then imprisoned in Lisbon⁶². Thus, he alludes to the oral version that circulated in Minas at the end of the 19th century, about a process brought by the colonist against the fearsome metropolitan executioner, at the beginning of the Brazilian republic. The nationalist idea persisted in historiography, before and after the 1994 reprint by Laura de Mello e Souza⁶³.

But there is no evidence of the alleged process in Portugal, in records of the Casa de Suplicação or the Chancellery of Dom João V, in accordance with the oral tradition in Ouro Preto – unfortunately, it is not known when Pascoal da Silva died⁶⁴. At the end of a series of short stories about distinguished figures, in the *Gazeta de Lisboa*, it is reported that on January 26, 1730 the *fidalg* Sebastião da Veiga Cabral, senior master sergeant, governor of the New Colony of Sacramento, and of the town of Abrantes in the War of Succession in Spain, died that week⁶⁵. In the handwritten gazettes of Évora, linked to the 4th Count of Ericeira Francisco Xavier de Meneses, very active in the Royal Academy of History, on January 24, 1730 it is written that

59. AHU, Rio de Janeiro, box 12, doc. 1315.

60. According to a Swiss traveler, the exile of 35 nobles represented more than ¾ of those who attended the court on gala days or accompanied the king in public. Merueilleux, 1989: 181-182. Silva, 2006: 116.

61. APM, SC-14 apud Campos, 2002: 239.

62. BNB, HD, TRB00055.0179, label 291536, Veiga, 1898: 3; 1898: 4.

63. Souza, 1994: 32.

64. *Ibid.* Pereira, 2016, 423. Monteiro, in press: chap. 1.

65. During this period, Pedro de Almeida is mentioned in the *Gazeta de Lisboa* for the births or deaths of his children until the news of his entry into the Royal Academy of History in the vacancy of the late Marquis de Abrantes in May 1733 – in December, his father, the 2nd Count of Assumar, died. Hemeroteca Municipal de Lisboa (HML), *Gazeta de Lisboa Occidental*, 4, 25/01/1725, p. 32; 4, 13/06/1726, p. 192; 46, 14/11/1726, p. 368; 4, 26/01/1730, p. 32; 31, 03/08/1730, p. 248; 22, 28/05/1733, pp. 175-176, 53, 31/12/1733, p. 440. Marco Antonio Silveira analyzes Pedro de Almeida's first practice at the Academy, seeing in it allusions to the ostracism experienced by the nobleman, as well as to the fact that he wrote the *Discurso* rather as a defense in a lawsuit, or to publish it as a handwritten or printed book «according to the style of the reason of state literature». But there is no evidence to support the latter assumptions. Silveira, 2019: 163-166.

this «great enemy» of the 3rd Count of Assumar died in prison in the castle of São Jorge, in Lisbon, leaving powerful judges as executors⁶⁶.

Veiga Cabral's memory is ambiguous. In 1730, Sebastião da Rocha Pita – founder of the Academia dos Esquecidos in Bahia in 1724 and supernumerary member of the Royal Academy of History – publishes in Lisbon his *História da América portuguesa* (History of Portuguese America), dedicated to Dom João V. In the last book of his work, the plantation owner devoted to the beautiful letters narrated the rebellion in Vila Rica under the leadership of Pascoal da Silva, Mosqueira da Rosa, the friars Vicente Botelho and Francisco do Monte Alverne, and others – but not Sebastião da Veiga Cabral, whom he praises as much as the governor himself⁶⁷.

Feu de Carvalho and Mello e Souza note that Pedro de Almeida immediately ordered the arrest of Sebastião da Veiga at the beginning of the repression, carefully sending him to Rio de Janeiro by making sure he was not released on the way. In May and June 1720 the *fidalgo* ran in the Overseas Council for the governments of Minas – for the third time – and of São Paulo, respectively⁶⁸. In the *Notícia*, the names of Sebastião da Veiga Cabral, followed by Pascoal da Silva Guimarães, are the most mentioned, second only to the protagonist «Count General». In the *Discurso histórico*, other powerful locals appear more, such as Manoel Nunes Viana and his cousin Manoel Roiz Soares, both described in a satirical way. Why did the handwritten edition of the *Notícia* concentrate reproaches against the first agents mentioned, leaving aside those who had an indirect participation in the uprising, or who later went to the backlands of Bahia?

When considering the trajectories of the two manuscripts and the «state» of Pedro de Almeida Portugal in the Portuguese kingdom in the 1720s, the issue becomes clear. At that time there remained an unwritten and undisclosed reservation of Dom João V to the untimely repression by the 3rd Count of Assumar in the Vila Rica uprising. The royal malaise may have been expressed in the relative ostracism experienced by this nobleman at court after 1725 – although the episode occurred for another reason and with a wider group – and was recorded later in the testimony of his son João de Almeida Portugal, 2nd Marquis of Alorna, responsible in the reign of Dona Maria I (1777-1816) for reviewing the process that condemned in 1759 the members of the Távora noble family and lineage, to whom she was linked by marriage. Furthermore, there was rivalry between Pedro de Almeida and the 1st Marquis of Abrantes, Rodrigo Anes de Sá Almeida e Meneses. After the death of this powerful nobleman in 1733, the 3rd Count of Assumar took his place at the Royal Academy of History, the same year his father, the 2nd Count of Assumar, died⁶⁹.

66. Lisboa et al., 2002: 72; Souza, 2006: 277-278, which nevertheless places his death at the end of 1729.

67. Pita, 1976: 276; Souza, 2006: 276-278.

68. Carvalho, 1933: 131-132; Souza, 2006: 276.

69. Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Ministério do Reino, leg. 214, doc. 17 apud Pereira, 2016: 311; Romeiro, 2017: 260-261; Merveilleux, 1989: 159; Lisboa et al., 2005: 54, 86, 235, 237, 241; 2011: 341; Mota, 2003: 333.

THE MEANING OF THE TEXT

At the confluence of these aspects one finds the sense in the circulation of the *Notícia*, probably read by Pedro Miguel de Almeida Portugal's peers since 1722, in Portugal, in order to form an opinion in his favor. At two points in the text it is mentioned that the count had a reputation for punishing crimes and serious cases more severely than other governors. But in the second part of the manuscript, the reputation in check is that of the king. Two among the nine numbered reasons allude to the need to show the rebels that the royal breath «does not faint» («nam desmaya»), because its shadow or image represented in the «lieutenant» made his justice triumph and the ministers feared and respected. After the rebels broke two pardons, the soft means were exhausted, and it was necessary to «purge with resolute and strong medicines» («purgar com medicamentos resolutivos, e fortes») – metaphors about the human body and medicine are frequent in the manuscript – as the situation threatened the king's credit and his devoted lieutenant⁷⁰.

Being a rebellion against the sovereign, quick punishment, without going through the slow pace and long procedure of justice, would curb any other excess, in view of the credit acquired by the king. According to the *Notícia*, in Minas, riots and uprisings never saw the royal arm strike the criminals. The punishment reverberated in the king's credit, and it was necessary to see in this aspect, more than in any other, the severe demonstrations and the rigorous effects of his power, since in Minas it was believed that the king only had the power that was bestowed to him by its people⁷¹. Thus this «state» was in danger, as reputation supported the authority and defense of princes, being more powerful than weapons and fortresses. Its loss caused disorderly effects, hardly recoverable. Lacking reputation, Dom João V – without being named in the text – would be less rich in this much envied part of his great possession⁷².

But despite Pedro de Almeida being identified in the *Notícia* as the king's representative, his application of the untimely punishment without formal justice did not represent the provisions of the crown. Thus, I understand the meaning of this text in the mismatch between the actions and ideas of the 3rd Count of Assumar, and the political praxis of the Portuguese monarchy in the face of riots and seditions, with more Aristotelian and Thomistic matrices in the fields of politics and justice⁷³. The *Notícia* shows the governor's interest in the written production of this text by the Jesuits Antonio Correia and José Mascarenhas, as well as in its

70. IEB-USP, AL-61, *Notícia da sublevação*, pp. 29, 51-53.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

72. Some marginal notes that guide the reading are highlighted: «Without punishment there is no respect» («Se não castiga-se ficava sem respeito») / «Because the people said that El Rey depended on the minas» («Porq' diziaõ os povos q' El Rey nas minas era dependente») / «The punishment to preserve his reputation ensures the credibility of the royal power» («Credito de El-Rey o castigo para conservar a reputaçãõ») / «How important is reputation» («Quanto importa a reputaçãõ») / «The wealth or poverty of the Prince is but reputation» («Na reputaçãõ consiste a riqueza, ou pobreza do Principe») and «the lack of punishment reduces the credit of power» («A falta do castigo deminue o credito do poder»). *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 54, 56, 58.

73. Monteiro, 2002: chap. 2, 7.

circulation – Pedro de Almeida did not have this technical skill. The 3rd Count of Assumar needed to look after his reputation in the kingdom and not exactly that of Dom João V, as long as his government was investigated in Brazil. Therefore, this manuscript can be interpreted as an appropriation of the language of the reason of state propagated by Botero in his *aggiunte*, for a «reason of the state of oneself», on the condition of the 3rd Count of Assumar in the Portuguese court society before his admission to the Royal Academy of History in 1733.

It is possible that the impulsive Pedro de Almeida left Minas in August 1721 with the intention of printing this *paper* in Portugal, perhaps under the care of his friend José Freire Monterroio Mascarenhas – the editor of *Gazeta de Lisboa* who also translated and wrote equally long *papers* to be printed separately. Erasures made in the same handwriting point in this direction. However, due to its delicate content to the public order of the Portuguese monarchy, the text of the *Noticia* was inappropriate for further circulation. It was handled in a select manner until it ended up in the hands of Alberto Lamego, who brought it back to Brazil.

I then retrieve the words of the valued bibliophile from the state of Rio de Janeiro in 1929, but to affirm that the search for the «truth» in a manuscript with reports and political ideas from the past should not be based only on what is written in it about events, ideas of imitated authorities or literary styles followed. Above all, it should cover detailed aspects of its text in form and content – including materiality – in relation to its likely social trajectory. A constant exercise in contextualizing the artifact, reading it inside and out in order to understand appropriations of ideas and languages, its first meanings and receptions, considering its passage through private and public collections until reaching our present.

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